

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

(currently amended) 1. A competitive, availability prediction system for predicting relative, competitive availability of seating on an airline flight, the system comprises:  
an availability predictor that predicts seating availability on a competitive flight;  
an availability system that produces an actual availability response for a flight; and  
a computing system that includes decision logic that compares the predicted answer from the availability predictor and the potential answer from the availability system to establish a decision with respect to actual availability.

(original) 2. The system of claim 1 wherein the decision of the decision logic is a bias that determines whether the potential answer should be modified based upon the relative competitive position of the competitor represented by the availability predictor.

(original) 3. The system of claim 1 further comprising:  
modifying logic that is responsive to the availability response from the availability system and from the bias from the decision logic to modify the actual availability answer in accordance with the bias.

(original) 4. The system of claim 1 wherein the decision logic determines whether the prediction from the availability predictor indicates that a competitor is in a more favorable or less favorable competitive position than the answer produced by the availability system.

(Previously Presented) 5. The system of claim 1 wherein a decision as to an actual availability answer is based on the decision from the decision logic.

(Previously Presented) 6. The system of claim 1 wherein the decision from the decision logic can have a plurality of states.

(original) 7. The system of claim 6 wherein one of the states include a neutral state that is does not tend to modify the potential answer received from the availability system.

(original) 8. The system of claim 6 wherein one of states biases a potential answer towards answering that a seat is available.

(original) 9. The system of claim 6 wherein one of states biases a potential answer towards answering that a seat is not available.

(original) 10. The system of claim 6 wherein state depends upon the relative competitive position of the competitor represented by the availability predictor.

(Previously Presented) 11. The system of claim 3 wherein the decision logic determines whether the competitor's available booking codes are at a lower price than those that the availability system indicates the user of the system can offer.

(original) 12. The system of claim 11 wherein if the competitor's available booking codes are not at a lower price, then the system can return a bias towards making the seat unavailable.

(original) 13. The system of claim 12 wherein if the competitor's available booking codes are not at a lower price, then the system can test whether the original query was for a low cost fare and return a bias towards making the seat not available if the query was for a low fare.

(original) 14. The system of claim 11 wherein if the competitor's available booking codes are at a lower price than those being offered by the user of the system, the system returns a bias towards making the seat available.

(original) 15. The system of claim 11 wherein if the competitor's available booking codes are at a lower price than those being offered by the user of the system, the system determines whether the query was for a high cost fare, and returns a bias towards making the seat available if for a high cost fare.

(Previously Presented) 16. The system of claim 1 wherein the decision returned changes the availability message from the availability system.

(Previously Presented) 17. A method executed on a computer system of predicting relative, competitive availability of seating on an airline flight comprises:

receiving by the computer system a request for availability of seating on an airline flight and executing in the computer system an algorithm to predict the seating availability on a competitive flight;

receiving by the computer system an actual availability response for a flight; and  
comparing the predicted answer from the availability predictor and the potential answer from the availability system to establish a decision with respect to actual availability.

(original) 18. The method of claim 17 wherein comparing produces a decision that is a bias that determines whether the potential answer should be modified based upon the relative competitive position of the competitor represented by the availability predictor.

(original) 19. The method of claim 17 further comprising:  
modifying the actual availability answer in accordance with the bias.

(Previously Presented) 20. The method of claim 17 further comprising:  
determining whether the competitor's available booking codes are at a lower price than those which the availability system indicates the user of the system can offer.

(New) 21. A computer program product residing on a computer readable medium for determining relative, competitive availability of seating on an airline flight, comprises instructions for causing a computing device to:

receive a query for seating availability; and in response to the query,  
produce an potential, actual availability response for a flight that can satisfy the query;  
predict seating availability on a competitor's flight that is a competitive flight to the flight that can satisfy the query and produce a predicted answer;  
compare the predicted answer and the potential, actual availability response from the availability system to establish an actual answer message with respect to seat availability; and  
send the actual answer message as the actual availability answer in response to the query.

(New) 22. The computer program product of claim 21 wherein the instructions to compare biases the potential availability answer based upon a relative competitive position of the competitor according to the predicted answer.

(New) 23. The computer program product of claim 21 further comprising instructions to:

modify the potential, actual availability response in response to the predicted answer and the potential availability answer to produce the actual answer message.

(New) 24. The computer program product of claim 21 wherein the instructions to compare determine whether the predicted answer indicates that a competitor is in a more favorable or less favorable competitive position than the potential, actual availability response produced by the availability system.

(New) 25. The computer program product of claim 21 wherein the predicted answer message has a plurality of states.

(New) 26. The computer program product of claim 25 wherein the one of the states is a neutral state that is does not tend to modify the potential answer received from the availability system.

(New) 27. The computer program product of claim 21 wherein the one of states biases the potential, actual availability response towards producing the actual answer that a seat is available.

(New) 28. The computer program product of claim 21 wherein one of states biases the potential, actual availability response towards producing the actual answer that a seat is not available.

(New) 29. The computer program product of claim 21 wherein the instructions to compare determines whether the competitor's available booking codes are at a lower price than those that the user of the product can offer.

(New) 30. The computer program product of claim 29 wherein if the competitor's available booking codes are not at a lower price, then the instructions return a bias towards making the seat unavailable.

(New) 31. The computer program product of claim 29 wherein the if the competitor's available booking codes are not at a lower price, then the instructions test whether the original query was for a low cost fare and the instructions return a bias towards making the seat not available if the query was for a low fare.

(New) 32. The computer program product of claim 29 wherein if the competitor's available booking codes are at a lower price than those being offered by the user of the program, the instructions return a bias towards making the seat available.